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COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
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Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Peter KOLAROV (Bulgaria)

Addendum

____. REVIEW OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs made an introductory statement. He emphasized the unique functions performed by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in considering the applications for consultative status with the Council and in reviewing the activities of non-governmental organizations, as well as in advising the Council and other organs and bodies of the United Nations on establishing links with non-governmental organizations. The current forms of co-operation between United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations had gone beyond those envisaged by the Council in resolution 1296 (XLIV). Efforts had been made to increase co-ordination, co-operation and exchange of information between the various offices of the Secretariat dealing with matters related to non-governmental organizations. Initiatives had been taken by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit to strengthen assistance to non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in the co-ordination of their activities. Efforts would continue to be made by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs through its Non-Governmental Organizations Unit to explore new avenues of communication between Member States, non-governmental organizations in consultative status and the Secretariat. He said that non-governmental organizations, in view of their knowledge and expertise, could greatly help in the formulation of plans and programmes of the United Nations, as well as in their implementation. Increased collaboration with non-governmental organizations in carrying out joint

activities with the Secretariat, such as seminars and conferences, technical assistance and operational activities, would enhance the effectiveness, relevance and impact of those activities and, in some cases, result in savings for the Organization. In the coming years, non-governmental organizations would have several opportunities to make a vital contribution to the activities of the United Nations through their active participation in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the programme on the prevention and control of AIDS, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Meeting on Population to be held in 1994 and in the area of disarmament and development. Their organizational skills, information capabilities and resources lent vital support and assistance to the United Nations and thus served as a source of strength and inspiration.

2. The Vice-President of the Conference on Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council drew the attention of the Committee to the importance of respecting precedents regarding modalities for the participation of organizations in consultative status in United Nations conferences and of bringing information on those precedents to the attention of appropriate Secretariat officials. She noted that the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit should be consulted in connection with proposals regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations conferences and in special sessions of the General Assembly. She stressed the need for uniformity in the access granted to non-governmental organizations in consultative status at special sessions and ad hoc committees of the General Assembly, as well as its Main Committees. The response of non-governmental organizations to United Nations resolutions could be facilitated if there were consistency in the criteria used and in the treatment accorded non-governmental organizations in consultative status by the various offices of the Secretariat. She strongly deplored a growing tendency to label non-governmental organizations as "northern", "southern" or "indigenous". The international non-governmental organizations in consultative status, irrespective of the location of their headquarters, had chapters or members in both developed and developing countries and the views of their wide constituency were reflected in their policy-making process. Finally, she noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit and the Interdepartmental Working Group on NGO-related Matters to strengthen and improve the relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. In that connection, she deplored the reduction of 33 per cent of the sources allocated to the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit and urged that the resources be restored to a level commensurate with the increasing demands made upon it.

3. In reviewing the report on the annual informal consultation (see E/C.2/1991/CRP.4), the members of the Committee stressed the increasing importance of the role and contributions of the non-governmental organizations in consultative status to the activities of the United Nations and called for strengthened and concrete collaboration in all appropriate areas. They noted that those organizations should utilize to the fullest extent the possibilities offered by their consultative status for participation in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

4. Regarding the participation by non-governmental organizations in consultative status in the work of the General Assembly through oral statements in its Main Committees or at special sessions, members of the Committee drew attention to the practical limitations and time constraints. It was suggested that by regrouping their views, non-governmental organizations would, when appropriate, ensure a modicum of participation in the work of the General Assembly. The Committee agreed that participation through written statements was very valuable and should be facilitated.

5. There was general agreement on the importance and usefulness of the annual informal consultation: it provided an opportunity for open and constructive dialogue and contacts as well as a forum for Governments and non-governmental organizations in consultative status to express their respective concerns.

6. The Committee commended the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs for its work, in particular for the excellent quality of the documentation prepared for the Committee.

7. The Committee strongly deplored the inadequacy of resources of the Unit, in view of the ever-expanding volume of documentation as well as the constant increase in the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status and the resulting increase in demands placed upon the Unit. In that regard, it was noted that, owing to the dire financial situation of the Organization, an increase in the resources of the Unit could only be achieved through redeployment within the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

8. The Committee stressed that Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) should remain the basis of, and guiding element for, the work of the Committee. The Committee noted, however, that there was a need to establish practical guidelines of an administrative and technical nature with a view to facilitating the work of the Committee as well as of the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit.

9. Regarding the applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by non-governmental organizations, the Committee noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit to implement the provisions of paragraph 40 (a) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and instructed the Unit to transmit to the Committee only those applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification for which the completed questionnaire had been submitted no later than 1 June of the year preceding the session of the Committee.

10. The Committee emphasized the need for non-governmental organizations required to submit quadrennial reports to provide a clear picture of their activities as they related to the United Nations. The Committee further noted that the reports should conform to the guidelines elaborated by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit pursuant to the relevant decisions of the Committee [in that connection, the Committee agreed that the guidelines should include as an annex a sample report in order to assist the non-governmental organizations].

11. The Committee further decided that only those reports elaborated in conformity with the guidelines and submitted to the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit no later than 1 June of the year preceding the Committee's session would be transmitted to the Committee for consideration. The Committee recalled that organizations failing to submit adequate reports on time would be subject to any reclassification in status that the Committee might deem appropriate, in conformity with paragraph 40 (b) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).